

THE DRAGOON

THE NATIONAL VOICE OF THE OLD COMRADES



THE ROYAL CANADIAN DRAGOONS ASSOCIATION

2019





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BACKGROUND IMAGE

Royal Canadian Dragoons, Warrant Officer
by B. Fosten

Opposite: Citizens of Leeuwarden celebrate during their
liberation in April of 1945



General Rick Hillier (retired)
OC, CMM, ONL, MSC, CD
Patron of the RCD Association

THE COVER



Members of The Regiment enter
Leeuwarden during April 1945.

From the Patron

General (retired) Rick Hillier, OC, CMM, ONL, MSC, CD

Staying in touch with those with whom we soldiered as Dragoons has never been easier. Click on any social media and you'll find the Regiment, the Regimental Guild or the Regimental Association in one form or another. Every single day I click on Facebook, or Instagram, and get to automatically see what Dragoons, serving or retired, from coast to coast, are doing. Tom Skelding makes us remember each day that every road we take has been lined by those who have gone before us. Whether that was in Western Canada, the Boer War, WWI, WWII, or any of the operations since then, we see the name, and final resting place of Dragoons, like us, who have served in our Regimental family and made the ultimate sacrifice while wearing the Springbok. Each day we get to remember those who have gone before us and realize the incredible legacy they handed us, the pride they continue to instill in us and the torch they gave us which remains, even in retirement, our responsibility to hold high.



It is not just those who have made the ultimate sacrifice, though, that we remember. Open up Facebook and there is Dragoon Don White, older now, frail, but representing us in Holland, Italy and other places as one of our Regiment who fought and won WWII, lifting the heavy yoke of Nazism from the good people of Europe and releasing the Dutch from the Nazis' brutal occupation and Winter of Starvation in 1945. Don was every Dragoon when the Prime Minister of the Netherlands named a tulip, the 'Don White Tulip', in his honour. We are so proud of Don, and all Dragoons from what the American journalist, Tom Brokaw, called the 'greatest generation'. That greatest generation distinguished itself by an incredible work ethic, an acceptance that sacrifices were required to build the kind of nation that they would want for their families and a pragmatic, practical and sometimes humorous approach to life that inspires to this day. These were Dragoons who did things instead of talking about doing things, accepted the hardships and fear of soldiering, kept going until the mission was accomplished and got better at what they did every single day. We are reminded of those important leadership traits when we see, hear and travel, virtually, with Don White.

All of these things are so easy to access and instantly bring us back into our Regimental Family. Most of us who are Dragoons are removed, either a little or a lot, from the mainstream of the Regiment when we leave active duty or are on ERE. The Association, made so user friendly by Badger Levesque's wonderful efforts, enables us to stay in touch. We know what the Regimental calendar is – it's there at a glance, what missions are being supported, the kind of training ongoing, the type of new equipment being brought into service, where and when the Chapter events are, how the Guild is doing with the second Regimental history that'll capture our story since the Centennial in 1983 and, most importantly, where everybody we have called 'brother or sister' is and what's happening with them. And yes, that includes when our circle of life on earth is finished. It has never been easier to remain a Dragoon.

It is perhaps even more important to reconnect or remain connected to the Regiment now, in these several years of historic anniversaries – 100 year anniversaries of the Battle of the Somme (and the death of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment at Beaumont Hamel on the first day – I just had to put that in), Vimy Ridge, Passchendaele and the the

end of World War I. Equally momentous are the 75th anniversaries of Liri Valley, the liberation of Belgium and Holland and the end of World War II. It is easy to remember the many times we commemorated the liberation of the city of Leeuwarden with Leeuwarden Day, on April 15th, each year. In this, the year of the 75th anniversary of that liberation, our Colonel of the Regiment has organized a pilgrimage of Dragoons to retrace the Regiment's route to that city. You can remember Dragoons who wore the Springbok then, like Don White, be inspired by them, learn from them, draw strength from them and be better men and women because of what they gave, and gave to us. Someone once said, 'If I can see so far, it is because I stand on the shoulders of giants'. We, serving and retired Dragoons of today, are who we are because of those giants that preceded us, serving our Regiment, Canada and the world and on whose shoulders we now stand. Stay in touch with them.

I'm proud to be the Patron of the Royal Canadian Dragoons Association. Just as proud, though, of my years of service wearing the Springbok while with the Regiment in Lahr, Petawawa and on ERE. I remember also having complete faith as a commander that the RCD would not fail me, or our nation, no matter how tough the mission. I enjoyed and enjoy the company of those with whom I soldiered. My 'Battle Buddies' and 'Brothers and Sisters in Arms'. I don't want to lose touch with them. And I won't, because I'm a member of the Regimental Association. Join me.

Memories of the **OLD COMRADES**



BGen Gautier visits the troops in Lahr, March 1982.

From the Editor

Michael A. Rostek

Greetings everyone! Welcome to the 2019 edition of Dragoon! I am honoured to be writing to you from my recently accepted position of Editor. As you know, The Royal Canadian Dragoon Association is a well-established Canadian institution and its members represent Canada's greatest military leaders from all ranks. Being asked to take the reins of Dragoon, the voice of the Association, rekindled a smouldering sense of pride and respect I had for the Regiment and Association. My 32 years as a Dragoon were filled with friends and memories, trials and tribulations, and in many ways, these experiences shaped who I am today. This Regimental family and wider community is among the most respected and revered in the Canadian Armed Forces and among defence associations. I am excited about being able to give back to the Association in a small way using a skillset I developed during my career as a Dragoon.



My first order of business is to recognize the dedication and service of Bann Price in delivering Dragoon over the last decade. Bann set a high editorial standard for a print media magazine which continues to be a welcomed addition in this era of fast-paced social media consumption. Bann set the bar quite high, and I will endeavor to continue to work towards that same high standard. Bann, it will be hard to think of Dragoon without you as Editor! Thank you once again!

I would also like to offer some thoughts on the future of the RCD Association. We find ourselves amidst a period of considerable uncertainty and change. No organization, whether private, public or non-profit, is immune to this change which attend to the complex interaction of demographics, technology and economics today. The RCD Association, an organization with a proud tradition of service, sacrifice and leadership, must also adapt to this new environment. The implications must be understood and acted upon if we are to sustain the Association into the future. From improved governance models and multilayer membership engagement strategies to widespread use of print and electronic media, the RCD Association, its volunteers and membership must endeavour to be at the forefront of this change. The RCD Association is about people; sustaining and improving our membership must be our first order of business. The continued print publication of Dragoon remains an essential component of connecting our membership. Equally important is the strategic use of social media and here I would like to acknowledge Tom Skelding for his skillful publication of the RCD Association Facebook page. But is this enough? We bear witness to declining membership numbers simply because many are finding methods to connect without the RCD Association. As we move into periods of growing uncertainty, we must consider how we retain our Regimental linkages recognizing their significance and what these relationships can mean for our own well-being. Matt Staley's piece in this publication is a powerful reminder of the importance of maintaining, and in many cases re-discovering, that Regimental connection.

If we adhere to the axiom, "the future is what we make it", you can quickly understand the significance of the RCD Association. Among the feature articles from Matt MacDonald, Jeff Barr, Andrew Fenton, and Tom Urbanowski, we continue to include our vital Chapter updates. The volunteers in our Chapters help maintain the linkages in the wider community of the Association in regions far from the home station. Their role is pivotal and vital to

the health and well-being of our Association. I would encourage all serving and retired Dragoons to establish or re-establish contact with their local chapters. You will definitely be welcomed to share an anecdote or two, a few laughs, and perhaps a beverage of choice with many friends.

In closing, I hope you enjoy this edition of Dragoon. It was brought together quickly due to the lateness of my arrival as Editor. I am thankful to everyone who agreed to contribute to this edition and for Badger's assistance in helping me re-establish the necessary contacts. I would also ask you to consider drafting an article or anecdote for Dragoon thereby contributing to our legacy and perhaps more importantly, the future of our fine Association! Last, I wanted to publically recognize Cpl Kevin Langille for the layout and his contributions to Dragoon. I have seen many publishing offices over my academic and publication career and I assure you that Kevin's skills are among the best I seen. Thank you Kevin!

I hope to re-connect with many of you the very near future. Until then..

Bold and Swift

Mike

Memories of the OLD COMRADES



RCD personnel working on trucks in a snowstorm at
St. John's, Quebec in 1941.



RCD Helmet Starburst Badge 1903-1907

From the President

Denis Levesque

Dragoons, Ladies and Gents

I was asked to toast the Regiment by the COL of the Regiment Peter Atkinson at the 2019 Leliefontein combined Mess Dinner. I found it extremely humbling as I recounted my time served in the Regiment and my words flowed from the heart. There was so much to be said but so little time as my wife said, 'Don't be long winded, it's a Toast.' We are the Royal Canadian Dragoons (RCD) Association. Many of us are aging but still fascinated by what we have accomplished over the years and take pride in being a Dragoon. We have lived many joyful memories of this fine Regiment. We continue to enjoy the spirit of fun, laughter and cohesion, felt by many since 1883. There are many of us that still take pride in visiting our fine Regiment during special occasions. We are so proud of our currently serving soldiers, Sgts, WOs and Officers and their accomplishments. In this edition of the Dragoon, not only do we get a glimpse of what the soldiers are currently doing, but the soldiers of the Regiment also get a snapshot of what our chapters are doing across our fine country. Please read on and enjoy the full spectrum of our serving and retired members in this combined Springbok and Dragoon. We as an association hope you will join us at some point, regardless of rank, amount of service served, or even trade. We have many members and fostered many relationships with our combat supporting and combat service supporting arms. We still have a ton of memories to share. Regardless of positions held. I believe we can push the Association further. We have so many soldiers who have retired from the Bosnia and Afghanistan campaign. I think our readers would love to have articles from those historical events in our history. Please, if you would like to contribute an article, contact Mike Rostek our Editor, or drop me a line and I will put you in touch with Mike. We as an Association would love to read factual articles of our recent history. Articles can be of anything. A good old story of humor, or even an adventurous event. We are all interested in events that show our pride in our Regiment.



Oh yes! The Ottawa Valley Chapter of the RCD Association are still in the planning stages of the Association bi-annual Gathering of Dragoons, to be held in Petawawa/Pembroke area. COVID-19 has created some challenges, but remain alert once the issues have been resolved, planning shall continue. It may sometime before travel becomes the norm again, wait for further details.?

We may not have a bar, but we do serve friendship!

Bold and Swift

Denis Levesque
President
RCD Assn



The Last Trumpet Call

2018

BARWISE Ralph
BOYLE Arthur George
BROWN Ron J.
CHRISTIANSEN Samuel
COWDEN Carl S.
D'AMOUR J. Paul Maurice
MOREHOUSE Walter Lindsay Alexander
NASH Bill
SIBLEY Vic
SUTHERLAND Gerald Alexander
Van IDERSTINE Raymond Peter
WRIGHT Derek

2019

ACREMAN Roger
BARNES Cecil David
CHANDLER Roland Allison
COTTON Roger
GARDAM John Allen Robert
KEAN Groovy
KITCHER Richard D.
NURSE Donald Roy
PARDY Robert
PIERCEY Lorne Lloyd
RAFUSE Gordon F.
RASMUSSEN Alf
RANKIN Keith
RESCORL A. Percy
SCHUT Edward G.
UPSAHW James Otis

"They shall grow not old, as we who are left grow old.
Age shall not weary them, not the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun, and in the morning,
We will remember them."





NATIONAL CAPITAL CHAPTER

After acting as host chapter for the memorable 2018 Gathering of Dragoons, which featured a dinner cruise on the Ottawa River, the past year has been a bit more relaxed. Some members were in attendance at the annual RCAC BBQ at the Perth Legion at the end of July. On the ninth of November, we had our Leliefontein gathering at the Army Officers' Mess. We also had representation in Kingston at a new event, a joint RCD / RCR luncheon to mark our shared Regimental birthdays, Jeff Barr was the organizer on the RCD side. April 12th marked our observance of the liberation of Leeuwarden. Unfortunately, representatives from the Dutch Embassy were not available to attend this year. We had our most recent event on November 8th, to again mark the anniversary of the action at Leliefontein. Among those present were Ross Carruthers, Jim Atkins, Alan Bolster, Tom Burnie, Walt Conrad, and Bob Hart.

On a sadder note, we lost one of our few World War

II veterans with the passing in November 2018 of Alf Rasmussen. Alf was for many years an active member of our Chapter Executive, and he was also a volunteer with the Canadian War Museum.

On the personnel side, there have been some changes. Bann Price has stepped down as Secretary, as has Bob Hart as our long-serving Chapter Treasurer. We thank them for their many years of service to the Association. Stepping up to fill both positions is Jim Atkins. Thank you, Jim.

We look forward to the coming year, particularly as it will include the Gathering of Dragoons in June, just down the road in Pembroke.

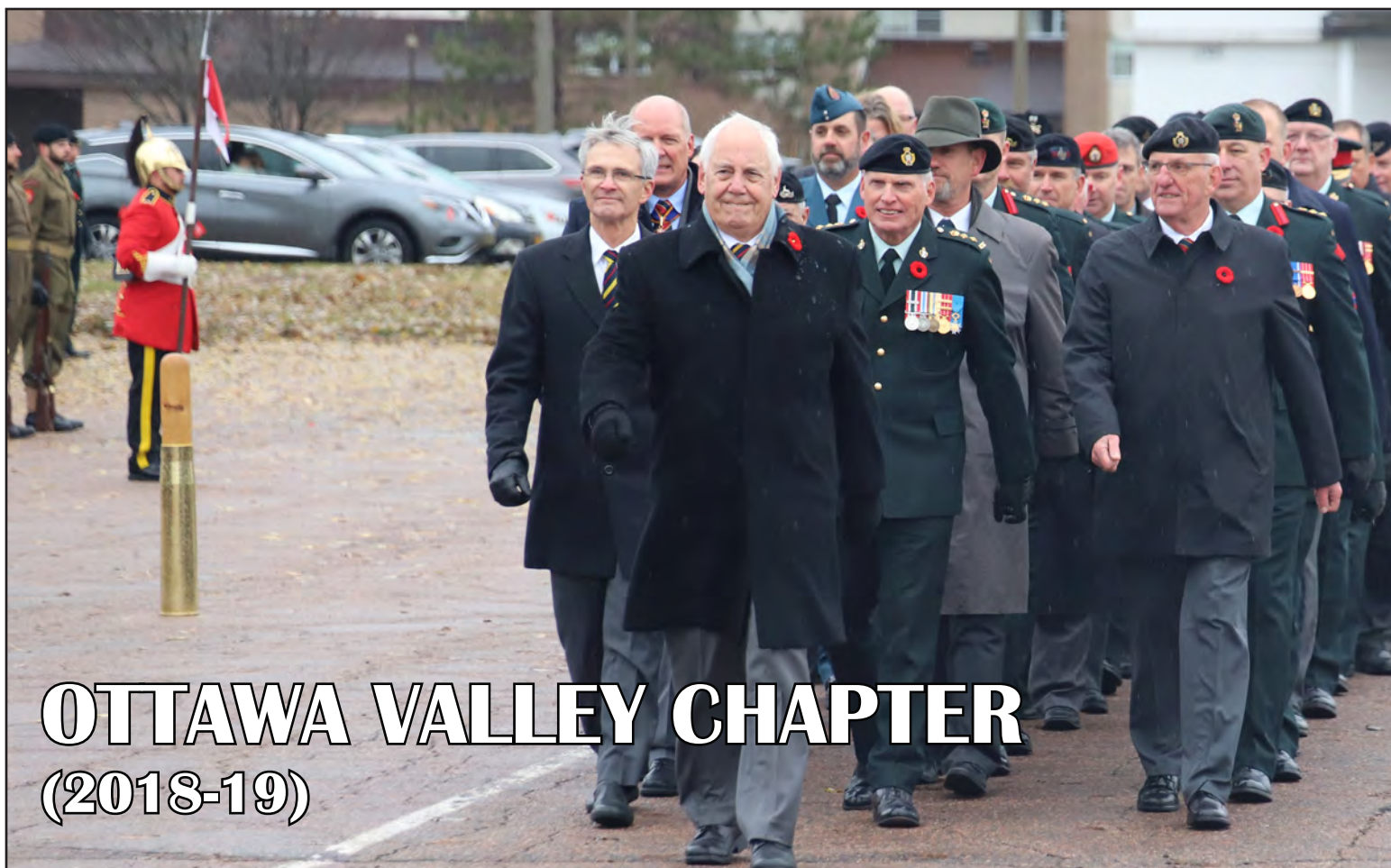
Bold and Swift

Ross Carruthers

Memories of the
OLD COMRADES



Maj Vickers and Maj Veitch standing in front of a building in Sicily, Italy at Christmas 1943.



Greetings from the Ottawa Valley Chapter (OVC). On behalf of all members we wish you and your family happiness, good health and prosperity over the upcoming year.

We conducted our spring and fall general meetings, keeping our members abreast of upcoming events and dealt with issues concerning the membership. One important item of business was the nomination of Gina Hiesler, the spouse of the late Fred Hiesler, as an honorary member. This was presented at the "Gathering of Dragoons" during the AGM and accepted. Congratulations Gina, well deserved.

At the time of writing and submitting this article, Leeuwarden was not celebrated, therefore we will pick up on that ceremonial event in next year's article.

Our annual Oktoberfest/Association BBQ, was held at the Holland Room, in the RCD lines. This event was once again a huge success despite the fact our attendance was down slightly. The Entertainment Chairman, Marc

Tremblay, this year donned an apron and was the chef for the evening. Well done Marc! A special thanks to WO Andrew Fenton, WO Jason Dunnnett and Sgt Stephen Rice for bartending, and the PMC for the use of the facility.

Gordie Meighan, once again packed up all his musical equipment and provided us with some good old German tunes. Well done to all!

The Leliefontein parade in November was once again a memorable one. With the added feature of the two beautiful black horses ridden by soldiers in scarlets was definitely impressive. Gen (Ret'd) Clive Milner once again led the "Old Guard" on the march past. This is always a highlight for us as members of the "Old Guard".

I had the pleasure of breaking bread and chatting with a number of the soldiers at the Soldiers Christmas Dinner. In our conversations, the soldiers were very enthusiastic and proud of the many accomplishments over the past



Annual Oktoberfest/Association BBQ (Holland Room).



Sterling Mercer and Bruce Prendergast telling tall tales.

year. It is always encouraging to see “presentations” at the dinner. This year was no exception; there were 10 promotions to MCpl and 3 to Sgt along with 1 CD and 1 CD Clasp presented. Well deserved and congratulations to all! It was obvious that morale within the Regiment is very high. Thanks to everyone who shared their stories of current Regimental activities.

Once again Muggsie has been tremendous in her support of the Association. Thank you so much for all that you do. You are definitely a vital link between the Regiment and the Association.

In closing, once again, the support of the Regiment over the past year has been outstanding. Both LCol (CO) Rob Marois and CWO (RSM) Jeramie Leamon have invited the Association to all Regimental activities. Tanks.

Audax et celer, Bold and Swift

Bruce Prendergast
RCD OVC Chairman

TOP IMAGE: The “Old Guard” led by Gen (Ret’d) Clive Milner during the 2018 Leliefontein Parade at Garrison Petawawa.



Don White accepting Tulip bulbs from Princess Margriet of the Netherlands

SOUTH CENTRAL ONTARIO CHAPTER

We've had a quiet but sadly eventful year. Some of the highlights have been Don White's annual BBQ in Oshawa (usually held in early July so feel free to contact us and find out the upcoming date for 2020) and the Warrior's Day Parade in August.

This year's BBQ was a little different from the previous one as the Annual General Meeting for our chapter, which was to be held during the afternoon, didn't happen this year. There were a few reasons for that which will be addressed a little later in this article. But despite that, a fun afternoon was had by all who attended. As usual, Don and his family out-did themselves with the food and refreshments that we all greatly enjoyed. And it was good to see friends we hadn't seen in a year or so. The Ontario Regt Museum also showed up with a Ferret Scout Car as a display that everyone took a chance to go see up close and even climb aboard for a personal

tour. Thanks to the Museum for coming out and adding to a fun day!

The other big event was the annual Warrior's Day Parade to mark the opening of the CNE in Toronto. Unfortunately, a few of us regulars had to miss it this year but thankfully our spots were filled by other chapters filling our ranks. A special thanks goes out to Badger Levesque for helping coordinate that.

It has also been a banner year for Don White! He was invited by the Prime Minister of the Netherlands to be his personal guest when the PM addressed parliament in late 2018. Then again in the spring of this year he travelled to the Netherlands where the Dutch Royal Family presented Don with his very own tulip, "The Don White Tulip".

On a sad note, and the main reason the Annual General Meeting was postponed, we lost two pillars of our chapter's executive this past year. Vic Sibley and Bill Nash both passed away far too soon. Their contributions to not only our chapter, but the RCD Association, as a whole, were always greatly appreciated and will be sorely missed. Stand Easy Dragoons.

We are eagerly looking forward to seeing many of you from other chapters this coming spring for the Gathering of Dragoons 2020!

Bold and Swift

Steve Mercer



Prime Minister of the Netherlands, Mark Rutte, christens the Don White Tulip during a ceremony at the Keukenhof.



Lieutenant Colonel C. T. van Straubenzee

"It was the C.O.'s intention to ride with "B" Sqdn. Whilst he was walking to his horse from a point where he had been reconnoitring, he was killed by a shell."

(R.C.D. War Diary, 9 Oct 1918)

Charles Turner Van Straubenzee was a professional soldier and veteran of the Boer War. Born on 17 June 1876 in Kingston, Ontario, he was graduate of the Royal Military College and the University of Toronto. In 1898, van Straubenzee joined the Royal Canadian Dragoons as a lieutenant and distinguished himself in numerous battles during the South African campaign. He was promoted to major in 1911.

Enlisting in the Canadian Expeditionary Force in September 1914, van Straubenzee served with the Royal Canadian Dragoons in France until 27 June 1916. He was promoted to lieutenant colonel in command of the Canadian Light Horse. On 13 March 1917, he returned to the Dragoons, succeeding C. M. Nelles in command.

He was killed at Le Cateau on 9 October 1918 during one of the last cavalry charges of the war. Command of the Dragoons passed to Major T. Newcomen. Taking over 200 casualties in troopers and horses, the Dragoons nevertheless captured Le Cateau and captured 400 German prisoners.

Kingston and Region Chapter Report



Greeting from the Limestone City of Kingston, actually the village of Lansdowne. Once again, we had a quiet year with our normal events to reconnect with friends in our Dragoon family. After the bulk of our members enjoyed the well hosted bi-annual RCD gathering in Ottawa, we settled into our routine events.

By all accounts everyone enjoyed the summer, some of us participated in Corps events such as the Harry Sampson Memorial Golf tournament hosted by Bill Soros in Smith Falls and the annual Corps BBQ in Perth, Ontario hosted by our good friend Clive Addy.

By all accounts everyone of our regular members and spouses enjoyed our own End of Summer BBQ held at the Army Navy Air Force Club here in Kingston. The traditional burgers and sausages were augmented by some wonderful side dishes, a sort of pot luck. Delicious fare which made the meal.

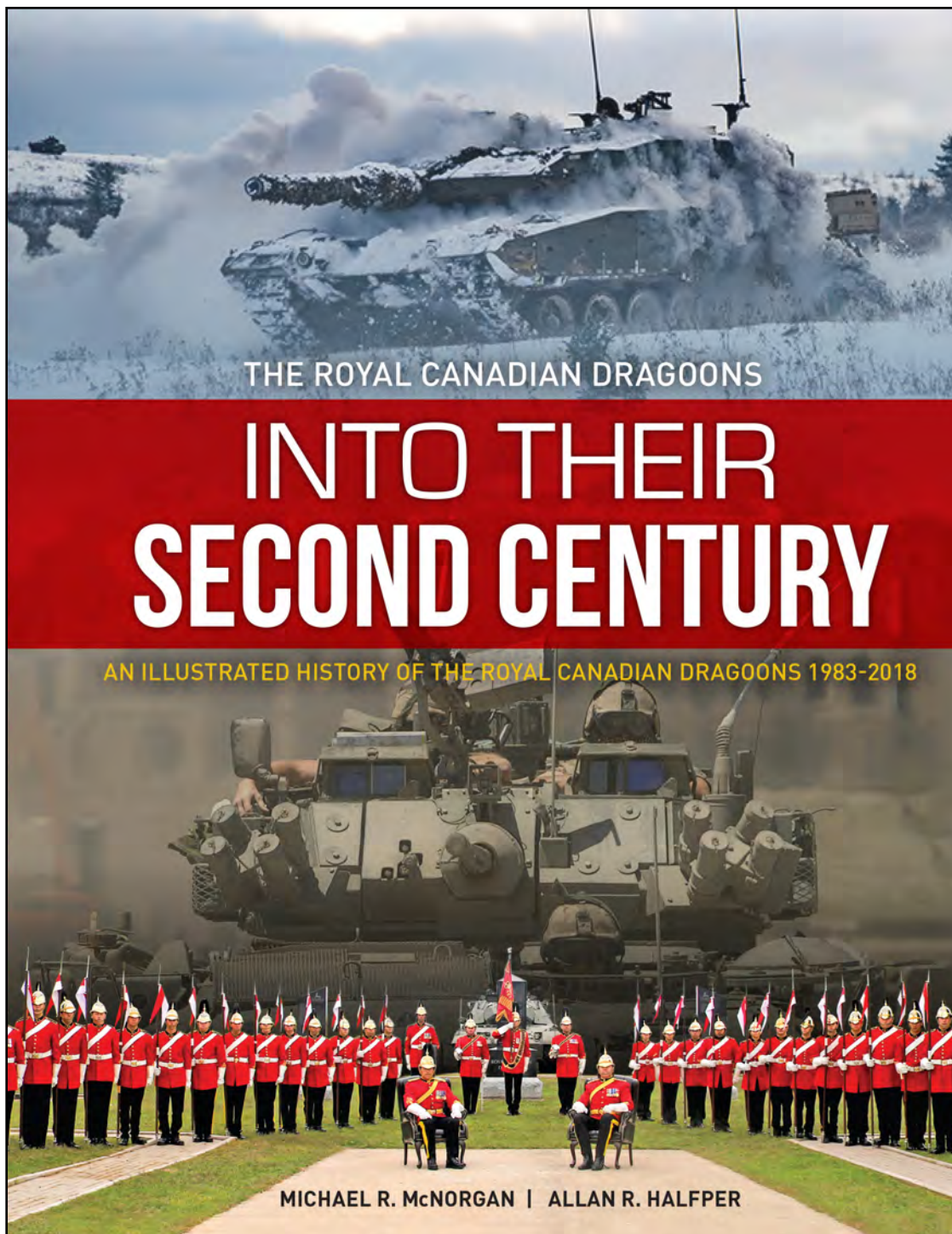
Our Chapter marked the anniversary of the Action at Leliefontein with a small gathering where we toasted the Regiment and our fallen. The year ended with the joint celebration of our birthday with the local chapter of the RCR Association. Jeff Barr organized a great event to mark this significant birthday.

The New Year brought new challenges and some good news for our chapter. We thank Jeff Barr for his outstanding stewardship of our finances and membership roles for the past four years. Jeff has rejoined his wife Dawn in Victoria, BC. Our membership ranks have grown this year, thanks in large part to the new Life Membership offer. This year we welcome Gavin Cross, Alec Murdoch, Mike Babin, Rob Kennedy, Rick Ryder-Burbidge (RB), and Barry Tulk.

Thanks to all for a good year.

Bold and Swift

Tony Slack



Available at The Regimental Kitshop
613-687-5511 Ext 7505



Alberta Chapter “Blackhatter” gathering in July 2019, Medicine Hat.

ALBERTA CHAPTER

Isn't it funny how time can get away from us? It's already been a year since I stepped into this position and am just now getting around to writing my first article as President of the Alberta Chapter. It's a most humble honor that I pen this first letter from the newly invigorated Alberta Chapter. Our efforts to get this chapter operational began about a year ago with a message of admonition from Badger to me. I'm not going to say he “guilted” me into the job, but does everyone else feel like Denis can pull the heartstrings like no other?

Of course, I offered to help and recruited the venerable Dave Blackburn to help me out. Sometimes old cranky NCOs need the finer hand of the gentlemen to temper our expectations. It's been a hectic year of chasing down previous members, switching bank accounts (try that when the last signatory has passed away), enrolling new people and trying to coordinate a Meet and Greet. However, I can honestly say we are making some headway but we still have a way to go.

I was fortunate enough to meet one of my greatest mentors when I took on this job. The file had been held by General Bob Meating while looking for a suitable replacement for Ralph Barwise after he passed. Those are hard shoes to fill. Ralph will be missed.

Getting to spend a few hours with General “Bobby Clobber” was most definitely one of the highlights of my summer. He's still that same guy who we grew up respecting and fearing. You can't explain the shoulder punch to someone who doesn't know “Bobby Clobber”. In the time we spent together, there wasn't a single Lahr or Petawawa Dragoon we didn't talk about. All your ears should have been ringing that day! Thanks General for the trip down memory lane! We spent the afternoon reminiscing, sharing laughs and shedding tears. A great visit!

So now Dave and myself have the crew commander's chairs of this new Alberta chapter.

We've started looking for ways to host gatherings for all of us spread across this province. We have held a couple small events such as the Blackhatter meeting in July in Medicine Hat, organized by some greats like Brian Talty, Scott Schall and Al Fuller. It was a great turnout for a first event, and will definitely grow with time.

Wainwright Dragoons hosted an annual Leliefontein gathering, chaired by Sgt Harold Willis and WO (ret'd) Lee Boon. Lee pulled out all the stops and festooned a local pub with RCD paraphernalia. Turnout has been typically small given the number of Dragoons in the

area, but now that Dave and I are sending out emails on a semi regular basis, we should see the numbers increase.

CSD Wainwright has annually flown the RCD flag at the front gate on Leeuwarden Day since I was posted there in '04. Doug McIlvenna has been instrumental in making sure that tradition is carried on.

So trust that the Alberta RCD Association is alive and healthy. Dave and I are committed to getting the Vets and serving members out of the nooks and crannies together. From the Naylor's and Aessie's up in Cold Lake, to the Keating's, the White's and the McTaggart's in "the Hat", and Donny Head, Rod Loesch and others in Edmonton, Teddy Betts in Calgary and everyone else... it's our mission to keep in touch with all of them. After all, every day is a great day to be a Dragoon. It's the ones we spend together that are awesome.

Bold and Swift
Gerry Olsen



Ian McTaggart with Gerry Olsen.



Wainwright Dragoons Sgt Harold Willis and WO (ret'd) Lee Boon host Leliefontein 2019 gathering.

BC CHAPTER LELIEFONTAIN 2019

Those of us present were delighted to reconnect with Ken Carhart. Ken was my Operations Officer in the very early 1980's, transferred to the British Army and had a very successful career. He was on a visit from the UK and we were delighted he was able to attend the lunch. On the right is Yvone Savoie [12e RBC] also an old Cold War survivor.

Pam Keith and Steve Griffin share a smile with our photographer. Pam is the wife of Rollie Keith [8CH/LdSH] who after decades of absorbing Rollie's stories and weapon descriptions and characteristics can carry on a spirited discussion with any of the members. Steve Griffin has been most gracious over the years meeting us mainlanders at the ferry slip and transporting us to the Yacht Club.

Tom Thomas, a Dragoon of early 60's vintage joined us and was able to keep the rowdier group of Strathcona's under control. Tom is the Flag Bearer at the Saltspring Island Legion.

Here we have an assembly of rascals, L-R Ken Carhart, Bob Black, Paul Crober and Dave Letson. This picture brings back many memories for me. Ken, Bob and Paul all served in the regiment when I was CO. Fine young officers all who all went on to have very successful careers. Dave is our most elderly member and I can assure you, you would never know it! When I was Director of Armour I pinned the fifth bar on the CD of Honorary Colonel Harry Letson [BCR].

So, now the lunch has concluded and the article is written. Thanks to the marvels of modern electronics it will be in Mike Rostek's hands by 10 November 2019, and I can gracefully hand over my responsibilities as BC Chapter Chair. Bob Black has graciously volunteered to take on the responsibilities and I cannot think of someone more qualified. Most importantly he brings youth, fresh ideas and his keen sense of humor to our Corps group out here on the Left Coast.

Darrell M. Dean



On a very beautiful 7th of November twenty four members of our Corps, support arms and services gathered to celebrate Leliefontein at the North Sannich Yacht Club. For those of you east of the British Columbia border please note the green grass and the fact that winter dress is not required in 15 degree weather. For future reference those folks not experiencing similar conditions, you would be most welcome at either of the lunches celebrated in the months of March [Moreuil Wood] and November [Leliefontein].

The dapper gadfly on the left, Gene Lake, is dressed in the latest Jones Chalk and Dawson threads while our most efficient event organizer David Scandrett, is resplendent in his regimental tie. David was tank trained by the Dragoons during the Cold War, in Germany, and has had an affinity to be one of us for years. Please note the two versions of the regimental tie. Which one would you choose?



In Retrospect

By Thomas Urbanowsky.



“1st Snowfall 1957”. Centurion tanks entering the back gate of the “Fort”, Iserlohn, Germany.

1957, Part 2

The Voyage

Boarding the Canadian Pacific ocean liner “The Empress of France” for our journey from the Port in Quebec City to our final destination, the Port of Rotterdam, Holland was to experience a “trip-of-a-lifetime” for a young Trooper with only \$100 in his pocket (an advance in pay for the trip). The luxury liner, with all of the amenities provided for a well-heeled civilian traveler, was without exception a total luxury.

Once aboard and allotted our cabins, followed by a quick briefing of the layout of the ship, we were free to roam. The RCD contingent was part of other military units and their families. There was also a civilian contingent of travellers and as luck would have it, this group included a large group of Canadian students heading to England for athletic competitions. They were in high spirits, and as part of the “RCD Singles

Group”, we were most anxious to meet and exchange of our knowledge of sports with them.

The first two days out of port were absolutely fantastic. A cabin with Porter service, excellent food, entertainment, dancing, bars and no duties!

However, the morning of day 3 there appeared to be “a change”. The unaccompanied male group was called to parade on portside Deck D, and SSM Ash Morris, mustache twitching, informed us that “there were reports” that some activities in the upper-class section by a few of our troops were not quite palatable for those who frequent there, especially during the hours of 2000 to 0100 hours. Therefore, as of that day, all the unaccompanied RCD personnel below the rank of Sergeant, were not permitted past Deck C between 1800 and 0600 hours. The troops began grumbling. In addition, a dress code was instituted - a jacket and tie to enter all bars and dance pavilions. More outrage and grumbling.

Day 5, another parade on Deck D, SSM Jimmy Gell, short squat and gruff in his best civilian attire spoke directly, "Alright you "singles", this is from the CO/RSM O Group last night. As of today, there will be a "picket" conducted by single RCD personnel to patrol access to Decks A and B. A duty roster will be set up, one Corporal and 8 Troopers, from 1000 to 2200 hours. Decks A and B are off limits until further notice. Dress - battle dress, low shoes. Sergeants Shaw and Patton will be your contact NCO's. Carry on."

Well, so much for "free roaming." But Armour integrity always prevails. The Recce-minded Troopers soon found better "digs" far below the decks in the form of crew bars and much cheaper beer! Our finances were in the "low depletion zone", we did not have to wear a jacket and tie in these facilities, and the crews were most accommodating.

Past the midpoint of travel, things settled down, the picket detail slipped away without notice as no one was "apprehended", and the anticipated arrival in Southampton, England was within sight and our voyage was coming to its end.

With an early departure from England, we were soon docking at the port of Rotterdam, Holland. Much activity ensued, briefings, followed by disembarkation, full battle dress order, families first, troops last. Our post-World War II train was far removed from the luxury class ship. To drive the point home, military style, once aboard the train, two box lunches were provided to see you in to Germany. The trip was not that long and our late arrival at the dispersal site was well organised by the Movements unit. Our final leg was to our new home base in the City of Iserlohn and the future "Fort Beausejour".

The remaining two months of the year were comprised of settling in, cleaning up and accepting the arrival of our equipment. To that end, we still had stores and ammunition stored in the TDM'S at Fort Anne in Werl, the previous home base of A Squadron RCD, and we still had to provide a guard detail at the Fort on a rotational basis. In the month of November, Headquarters Squadron's Signals Troop was detailed in part for that task. On arrival, we shared quarters with a detachment from a C-Pro-C unit. Our guard schedule

was two on - four off for a week period. On a particular day-night shift, I was relieved at 2200 hours by Trooper "Pop" Brennan, a World War II veteran. Somewhere at the stroke of midnight, all hell broke loose, and small arms fire was heard at the TDM site. The guard commander and guard were awoken and ran down to the TDM's with 9MM pistols at the ready, not knowing what to expect. The TDM site was fully lit up, the gate was closed, and all looked quite secure. Sitting on a knoll by the small guard shack was our own Trooper, Pop Brennan, 9MM pistol in hand, a flask of "liquid encouragement" by his side. He looked up at us and said, "jack rabbits, got to get me some for the wife for Christmas dinner." The situation was quietly resolved, all back to normal and the C-Pro-C Corporal was most understanding. The Duty Officer across the way at Fort St Louis only muttered under his breath, scorning the new arrivals.



Canadian Pacific brochure cover.
The daily brochure listed all events.

over to another unit and we spent Christmas in our surroundings within the City of Iserlohn, Hemer, and the outlying areas where a portion of the Regiment's families found accommodations.

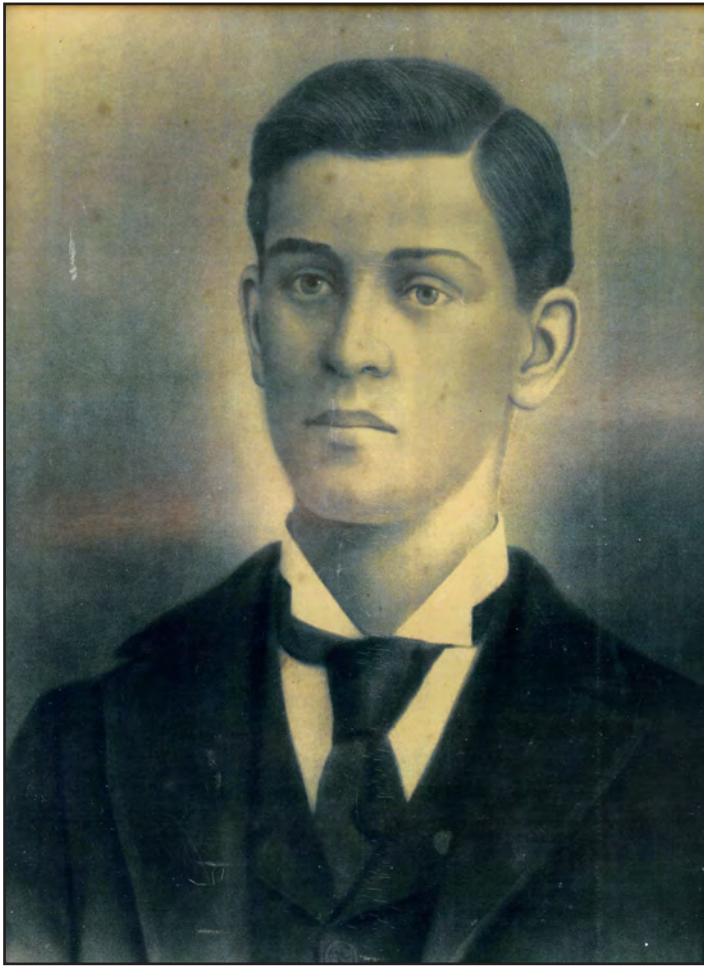
As for the single living in troops within the Fort, if you wanted to go out, the dress code was still in effect. Shirt and tie and sign out at the main gate guard room and be back by midnight. Again, much grumbling by the troops as this dress code did not apply to the married troops living in the PMQ's or elsewhere. As was with the monthly pay, the married and senior ranks could draw their full allotment, but the single Trooper could only draw half, in portions of British Armed Forces banknotes and Deutsche Marks. If you wanted a full pay, you had to justify to your Troop Sergeant "why" you needed this, as in, I want to buy a "suit" to go out, or buy a tie or a radio, etc. After six months of this regime, and on Saturday morning quarters inspection, our gallant Sergeant Shaw, suddenly states, "Okay guys, I want to see all those suits and radios and stuff that you requested your full pay for." A small panic ensued as we could not move fast enough between rooms to shuffle the merchandise around. Within reason, our Troop Officer, Lt Ramsay Withers, who later became the CDS, convinced the commanding officer, LCol A.L. Brady, that this policing should not apply as this was not the case with the rest of the Canadian Brigade Group. And so, in part, our "singles" lives took on a brighter future as we were once again allowed to roam freely, and roam we did to all the interesting parts of Europe.



"Dress Code in Effect". Sig Bill Dyke and Tpr Tom Urbanowsky, Iserlohn, Germany, 20 December 1957.



1st Batch of Jeeps arrive for RHQ-Sigs Tp, Fort Beausejour, 1951.



HONOURING AMHERST ISLAND'S

BOER WAR HERO

Taken from an article by George Halladay
The Kingston Whig - Standard, Kingston, Ont.
Friday, November 5, 2004.

After the signing of the peace treaty in May, 1902, between Britain and the South African republics, the last contingents came home from Canada's first overseas war - the Boer War - to a small welcome. Not for them the crowds and bands that had lionized the heroes of Paardeberg, Leliefontein and the Relief of Mafeking. For those men of the Royal Canadian Regiment (RCR), the Royal Canadian Dragoons (RCD) and the Royal Canadian Field Artillery (RCFA) had brought glory to the young dominion, not then 33 years old.

The Boer War had put Canada on the world map. It saw the making of a real Canadian Army - a dry run for the

Towns and villages came to the aid of their returned sons with money, gifts, jobs and memorials and monuments. In Montreal, children giving pennies, nickels and dimes raised \$16,547.17. This money they sent to the queen, along with an album with the photos of 1,000 children who'd contributed. Monuments in honour of individual soldiers appeared in such places as Woodstock and Port Hope. A brass plate on the wall of St. Paul's Presbyterian Church on Amherst Island reads: "In memory of Edward Allan Filson, a native of Amherst Island, corporal in 'A' Squadron, Royal Canadian Dragoons. Killed in action at Lilliefontein, South Africa, Nov. 7th 1900 while gallantly defending the guns of 'D' Battery R.C.F.A. Aged 23 years. Erected by his fellow citizens." A statue of Concordia, the Roman goddess of harmony, stands in the churchyard, dedicated to Filson's memory. A true cenotaph, it's an empty tomb. Filson lies in South African soil at Belfast, the namesake of the Irish city from near which his family had come to Canada 50 years before. The Canadian graves in South Africa weren't ignored. They were found by Mrs. H. G. de Lotbiniere and the Guild of Loyal Women of South Africa, who also raised monuments, despite a nasty row between Lady Minto's Canadian South African Memorial Association (CSAMA) and the Independent Order of Daughters of the Empire (IODE). But when the dust settled, the task was also funded by the IODE. The unveilings in some 23 cemeteries were graced by parades and speeches. For these people took their empire to heart. And the blood of Canada was a main part of its cement.



Cpl Filson Monumnet - Amherst Island



(L-R) Matt Staley, Tom Skelding and Jim Ferron during the 2019 Leliefontein Mess Dinner

I've done many operational tours and coming home was never easy. It's always a readjustment. I haven't come home in honesty. My soul is somewhere between Bosnia, Kosovo and most assuredly Afghanistan. I know now that I never readjusted. I just did. I carried on. I loved my job and therefore buried things that bothered me.

After 2008 I was burnt out. The spark was gone and no tinder or match could ever reignite it. I was a husk of a "has been" soldier. My heart was broken. It was that "sound of silence", but in a very bad sense. That most assuredly spelled my doom and I didn't see it.

I tried to cope with the demons who came calling every night. Every night. I drank 'till I passed out and still these nightmares flooded in. During the day, while I tried to soldier on, I'd go on tangents of hate to my enemies; I'd feel so much loss for losing one of my soldiers; I'd freeze in the midst of doing something important.

In my mind, I never came home to my family, my friends and to my job.

I was broken in mind, body and most importantly in spirit.

I couldn't control easy things like grocery lists, or what I needed to do to lead troops. I was a disaster. Two of my longtime friends, and a boss of mine pulled me aside one day and said point blank that I'm messed up mentally. I balked. I made excuses. I wanted to smash them in the face and run as far away as possible because

they just called me out on my bad behaviour. But I didn't have anywhere to run.

So I got help. And it worked. Unfortunately, I was battling a war with too many fronts. I lost.

So where do I go from here? Not a bloody clue is what I knew deep down. I've been fighting my ghosts for what seemed like an eternity, and brothers and sisters, they were winning the war of attrition.

So I flamed out, hard!

After the personal fracas and show that ensued, I left the only thing I loved. The only thing I knew. I became a "civvy" with hatred for those and what I loved. I became despondent. Worst of all, I became a hermit who wanted no contact with anyone or anything from the institution. I undertook therapy every 3 days for years. I tried every known way to cope. It did work in stages. Yet my dark past always crept in when I least expected it.

Over time it did get better, even though I now had to deal with a blood disorder which tried to kill me more thoroughly than the Taliban could possibly imagine. I fought that too. Tooth and nail. No one puts me in a corner without suffering the consequences.

Now it's a few years later, a few heart breaks and a ton of crazy...enter late October 2019.

So many times in those last years before Leliefontein I've thought about coming back to the Regiment. It

usually ended in me having panic attacks, some serious depression and using maladaptive coping strategies to survive. I thought I had resolved my anger and loss since retirement.

Nope. A hard nope.

I thought all I needed was to just let go of the pain and the loss I've suffered. I thought everything would be just fine. I had been training my mind for this for quite a while.

It wasn't.

I wasn't.

So this year I committed to going home.

Then I snapped. I was up and down like a bobbing ship in 80 foot waves. I went too far left and right when it was just so simple. I just had to plot a course and plod along. So, simple but what a psychological orgy of feelings and worry.

It took my best friends, my lovely gal and a serious amount of holding on to get in that car and drive to one of my dearest friend's house in Chalk River. But I had escape routes...I planned. I knew I could bail at any second. During the drive, I was petrified. So, I just let it be for what it was. I listened to music, I talked to my gal. I chewed nicotine gum like it was the end all and be all of my salvation. I tried as hard as possible to stay in the moment even if I stroked out. I used every positive coping strategy I knew.

Then revelation. Drum roll please.

Because I didn't need to let go. I just had to accept the past for what it was and to look ahead to an unpredictable but happy future. I had to accept the pain as my own. That's a bloody hard thing.

I came home to the Royal Canadian Dragoons last weekend. I came home to my friends, my job and the one thing that I most missed; the feeling of being a part of something much greater than me.

It feels like I've come full circle. I came back to deal with my past, through the present.

And I was scared to near bowel movement...

Through joy of reunion and great friends I've accepted my demons. I am ready to be part of something bigger than me again. No more self-imposed exile. No more beating myself up for stuff I couldn't control.

It's a great day to be Dragoon.

It's not about the horrors of war or losing my friends on the battlefield. It isn't about the killing anymore. It's about the friendships through adversity that will last 'till I die. It's now about serving in a different capacity.

It's about being there for my friends who would die for me. It's about those who suffer the demons who want to claim them too.

Because if it wasn't for my friends I'd be another statistic. Another suicide.

So...

What can I give back to this Regiment of brethren to perpetuate its ability to help those lost souls like me? What future are we going to get into that requires compassion and understanding when troops burn out and act out? What can I do to continue my healing journey as I help those who are my brothers?

Because I know I cannot do it alone.

What can I do for those who had my back when I couldn't even stand up?

So I will give of myself. A listening ear. A firm hug and reassurance. Some wisdom gleaned over my suffering.

So come home. Come home to your family of loved ones. Come home to society. Come home to the friends who would kill and die for you to be better.

I was once a broken soldier, but I am now a man again. I am not healed by any means. But bit by bit, I am going to be okay.

My name is Matt Staley. And I am a Royal Canadian Dragoon.



RCD RECCE SQUADRON 1987 – 1988

I must offer a disclaimer before I address this subject. It happened more than 30 years ago and my memory, never that great to start with, has deteriorated even further. Additionally, I was never one for notes or picture taking so what follows is a product of, at best, a very flawed memory. However, when asked by our Association President, Badger Levesque, to pull together an article I could not in good conscience refuse. Badger knows how to pull a few levers with me as he was my operator on my first tank when I arrived as a brand new troop leader to the Regiment in Germany in 1977 and we served numerous times together after that. He knows where the skeletons are buried and I am not yet ready for some of them to be exhumed. I had the great honour

of commanding Recce Squadron I am about to describe and I can say categorically it was one of the great experiences and privileges of my career.

The Royal Canadian Dragoons rotated back to Canada from Germany in the summer of 1987 and replaced the 8th Canadian Hussars (8CH) within the Special Service Force at CFB Petawawa. Prior to deploying to Germany the 8CH, as part of their operational mandate in Petawawa, had maintained a jump qualified reconnaissance troop as part of the Airborne Battle Group.

Recce Squadron that year was comprised of an SHQ, three seven-car Lynx-mounted recce troops, a robust assault troop in M113s and an echelon. The overall Squadron totalled about 150 personnel. From my very admittedly biased perspective, it was one of the finest collections of leaders and soldiers ever assembled in the Regiment. Peter Wonderham was the Sergeant Major, Walt Natynczyk the 2IC, Larry Maybe the BC, Mike Rostek and Roger Cotton two of the Troop Leaders, Badger Levesque the SQ, Angus Gosse the Ops WO and Luc Rousseau and Tom Skelding the 1st Troop and Assault Troop WOs respectively. Sergeant Ron Whitehall, one of the toughest soldiers I ever met, was a Patrol Commander and just one of a host of tremendous Sergeants. Even the future Patron of the Regiment, Dave Batten, was a brand new Trooper. There were, of course, many others, too numerous to mention, but I will say that in my memory most were of the calibre of those I have named.

Getting re-established back in Canada after several decades in Europe was a very significant undertaking, especially as we were converting from tanks to reconnaissance platforms. But, with the group we had, it came together very quickly, unsurprisingly. PCF courses including driver, gunner and assault trooper were run, equipment and vehicles organised and issued through the late summer and early autumn. All would have been pretty straight forward except for one very significant wrinkle.

Prior to returning to Canada, the RCD had been informed that the Army had determined that the commitment to the Airborne Battle Group from the Regiment would be increased to Squadron size and that shortly after arrival back in Canada, in order to jumpstart the

process so to speak, a complete basic parachutist course of 50 positions would be dedicated to the Dragoons. Therefore, in August that year 45 members of the Squadron deployed to the Airborne School in Edmonton (5 of the 50 positions were dedicated to higher priority Army personnel).

To the Parachute Instructors it must have seemed like Christmas came early that year because they had never previously had the opportunity to put that many blackhats through the rigours of jump school at one time. We didn't help our own cause all that much as every time we were instructed to yell "Airborne" we responded with a resounding bellow of "Armour". The resulting 50 quick push ups became a very common occurrence over the next few weeks.

The Dragoon contingent included, Officers, Senior and Junior NCOs and Troopers in a ratio reflective of the overall numbers in the Squadron. Student ages ranged from 18 to 35 with the younger bucks heading out each night to sample the delights of the Edmonton night life and the older bunch, certainly including the OC, collapsing onto their bunk in the barracks by 19:00h. The course gave a lot of us the chance to get to know one another quickly in a robust physical environment which certainly paid dividends over the rest of our year together. Everyone looked after everybody else and helped where required and as a result we had a final pass rate of, if I recall correctly, 40 out of 45 which I understand is far above the norm. No one quit or was failed and the five who did not finish were the result of

injuries sustained during both ground and jump training none of which, thankfully, were overly serious.

All of us from the course returned to Petawawa in early September and embarked along with the rest of the Squadron and Regiment on normal fall training. We progressed from individual training to crew, patrol, troop, squadron, regiment and brigade-level exercises. We also did some training with the Airborne Battle Group. As ever, there was a healthy bit of inter-troop rivalry and I recall that Assault Troop was taking some flak for what was perceived as a distinct lack of skill with chainsaws as they worked to emplace barriers during one of the exercises. Not to take a slight lightly, they produced the most impressive and massive bonfire at the Squadron smoker on the Matawa plain at the end of training. Great fun was had by all and I am sure that damn fire could be viewed from space.

In addition to all our routine Armoured Corps training we invested heavily in airborne specific training. We continued to send personnel on the basic parachutist course but also loaded soldiers on the jumpmaster and packer/rigger courses including the parachute instructor course. We were building the skills to support our training but also to prepare the Lynx to be dropped and manned in support of airborne operations.

Over the course of the year we were involved in a number of exercises including deploying the whole Squadron to the Collingwood, Ontario area in a large Aid to the Civil Power exercise. At another time we



agreed to play enemy force for an exercise with 10th Mountain Division in Fort Drum New York. The plan was to pre-deploy a small SHQ and echelon and then jump in about 50 soldiers and airdrop seven Lynx. Phases one and two went OK but high winds meant we could not drop the Lynx in Fort Drum so they were diverted to and dropped back in Petawawa. That meant that for those of us on the ground we had to cover a manoeuvre box designed for mounted activities on foot. It was quite an effort but everyone pitched in and we got it done and fulfilled our mandate in true Dragoon fashion. If you ever want to hear some good stories about this exercise, track down Tom Skelding and/or Ron Whitehall, buy them a beer, and be prepared to be entertained.

We also had a very interesting adventure training program. Someone, and I believe I am correct in blaming it on Larry Maybe, came up with the brilliant idea that we should re-visit our roots and head to Ste. Jean, Quebec where the Regiment was once garrisoned and present a plaque. The only hitch was that we would do it on bicycles. I am not sure why I agreed, but in what seemed like no time at all we were all mounted on begged, borrowed, and probably stolen bikes pedalling out the front gate of CFB Petawawa on our way to Ottawa, Cornwall and Ste. Jean. We all made it and no one got killed but my butt wouldn't talk to me for about a year after. It was great training for those who had to organize and execute the very complicated administrative plan to make it all happen and the trip itself provided lots of stories and laughs for the rest of us.

One personal story from our first night in Ottawa occurred after we had set up at the armoury next to NDHQ. As soon as the soldiers got their kit sorted and themselves cleaned up they, of course, headed off to the Byward Market to sample the delights of downtown Ottawa. A few hours later, after recovering from the day's bike ride, Pete Wonderham and I decided to see what the folks were up to so we headed down to the market. I asked Pete what he thought everyone was up to and he said follow me. There was an, apparently, relatively well known strip club that had a huge round circular platform that was the stage where the entertainers performed with about 40 chairs bumped up against it. Not surprisingly, when we poked our heads

in to have a look, on every last chair was poised a Recce Squadron soldier. We only had to bail one soldier out of a Hull jail the next morning before we headed out on our next leg so overall, things didn't go too badly.

Late in the training year we trained in Petawawa and then participated in the Merritt Cup Recce Competition in Gagetown. The training and competition were very demanding physically and as a result, the squadron was by far the fittest I have ever seen. Although we didn't win, I was proud of how everyone performed in our first year back in the competition.

Just about at the end of our year together, the Army decided not to proceed with the plan to sustain a squadron-sized commitment to the Airborne Battle Group so our experiment came to an end. The Regiment did continue to provide a jump troop to the Airborne Battle Group until the early 1990s.

The year went by in a heartbeat or so it seems. All I remember now is the great people, their tremendous professionalism and the pride I felt in serving with them. I will never forget that year and will forever feel deeply privileged for having been part of Recce Squadron, the Royal Canadian Dragoons 1987 - 1988.



Memories of the OLD COMRADES



Unveiling ceremonies of the historic plaque commemorating Major Edward James Gibson Holland V.C. on 19 October 1969 on the grounds of Trafalgar House on Argyle St. in Ottawa. (L to R) M.K. Roberts A.M. Lapierre.



Bosnia On My Mind

The Bihac Pocket - A Look Back

“Jeff, we like you ... you seem to be a good officer and a decent fellow but ... make no mistake, we will chain you to the Una River bridge when the Serbs attack.”

After hearing these stark words from the mouth of Lieutenant Colonel (LCol) “Nurko” Durvisovic, my Bosnian Army (ABiH) counterpart, I thought to myself: they don’t teach you this sort of stuff at the Armoured School!

It was July of 1995, I was a newly promoted major and the massacre at the UN “safe area” of Srebrenica had just happened. I was a UN Military Observer (UNMO) trapped inside of the “Bihac Pocket,” another so-called Bosnian UN safe area akin to Sarajevo, Mostar, Gorazde and Tuzla. Nurko, the 5 Corps ABiH senior liaison officer (LO), was indeed a rarity. He was an ex-LCol Intelligence Officer in the Yugoslav Army (JNA), who also happened to be a Muslim. From his blunt warning to me, I deduced that: Nurko believed that a major coordinated attack from the warring factions facing

Bihac was imminent as the Serbs, prior to the expected Croatian/US-backed offensive (later conducted as Operation STORM), were looking to create a direct corridor through Bihac for the Croatian (Krajina) Serbs to escape to Serbia proper; and the ABiH would not hesitate to use me as a human shield when the attack came. I reckoned that my fate would be much like that of Captain Pat Rechner, PPCLI, an UNMO on the Bosnian Serb-side at Pale, who in May of 1995, had been captured, held hostage and was chained to a key military ammo depot in order to deter NATO airstrikes against the Bosnian Serb Army (VRS).

Mentioning that I was an UNMO during the war in Bosnia was usually met with stereo-typical ignorance. Namely, that UNMOs were redundant and not required, especially when employed alongside a professional

Top Photo: LCol Jeff Barr pointing to a TMA-4 minefield that he had found and marked in the hills near Kljuc -- not far from IFOR's Camp Maple Leaf, which he later helped establish in Zgon.

(read NATO) UN battalion, as was the typical Canadian experience; and that it was a straight forward job between established buffer zones and the hardest part was cooking meals during your static observation post duties. Let me clearly state here that this was not my reality.

In the case of the Bihac Sector, there was not a highly trained or equipped UN battalion. The battalion in our sector was from Bangladesh, which had limited duties and employment. As a result, UNMOs became essential. We were very fortunate to have a small yet highly professional UNMO team in Bihac, which operationally de facto ran the Sector. In addition to myself, we had a New Zealand Special Forces Captain, a Dutch Marine Captain and a Spanish Marine Major. When I first arrived, I replaced a Nordic major that had to be evacuated due to a psychological breakdown.

In Bihac, we also had the pleasure to work overtly with a four-man team of British Joint Commission Officers (read Special Air Service). Some of them were ex-members of the UK armoured corps and we quickly established trust and agreed to split up much of the workload to cover more ground when we realized that we were redundant in our many duties and reports.

Without being overly dramatic, my duties as a UNMO in wartime Bosnia required considerable resilience and all of my inter-personal and military skills just to survive. Did I mention that I was unarmed? Not something an armoured type is accustomed to. I often announced to the locals that I was armed with only my smile. Also, I made a concerted effort to learn as much of the Serbo-Croat language as possible and my go-to phrase was: Ja sam Jeff, nema puska or: “my name is Jeff and I have no weapons!”

The overall situation in the ever expanding/contracting Bihac Pocket in northwest Bosnia was desperate and extremely complex with four separate warring factions in play: the Bosnian Muslim and Bosnian Croats inside of the Pocket; the Bosnian Serbs to the East and North; the Krajina Serbs to the West and South in Croatia; and a unique, breakaway Muslim group based out of Velika Kladusa under the leadership of Fikret Abdic, a warlord whom I met once and who sympathized, mostly for economic reasons, with the VRS faction.

Croatia eventually convicted him as a war criminal in 2002 and sentenced him to 20 years in jail. In addition to his crimes of promoting torture and sexual assault, he illegally “detained” the members of Velika Kladusa UNMO team often for weeks at a time, making them largely ineffective. As can only happen in the Former Yugoslavia, upon his release from jail in 2016, he was elected mayor of Velika Kladusa and remains the mayor to this day!

Suffice it to say that there were no static lines or established buffer zones in this area of operations. Daily artillery and/or mortar shelling was normal and it rained on Bihac from all sides from the Serb and/or Abdic factions. Our UNMO team headquarters and accommodation was the only one “offered” and was owned by a Bosnian Serb lawyer, who had married a local Muslim. The downtown house was close to the ABiH military buildings and was located within the 90 per cent beaten zone of artillery. I quickly learned the essential survival skills of: listening closely for shelling, detecting it’s direction and time of flight, and taking shelter on the correct side of houses or in basements when it exploded within 200 meters.

My official daily duties included: shelling investigations and damage assessments, investigating and recording mass graves, witnessing daily body counts in local morgues, organizing and conducting body and prisoner of war (POW) exchanges (with the Red Cross, if it was safe for them to be in the Pocket), mapping new minefields (there were an estimated one million mines laid in the northwest part of Bosnia alone), confirming checkpoints and village patrolling when it was secure to do so. These duties often involved the precarious crossing of front lines to personally organize meetings and exchanges. I always tried to organize these faction crossings in the mornings because we could better see the inter-boundary minefields and booby traps in daylight. And, perhaps more importantly, later in the day when the local soldiers were drunk, they often took direct-fire artillery and sniper shots at our white UN vehicles for sport. Speaking of alcohol, I will freely admit that I gained the best cooperation and did most of my best work after all parties had imbibed. For professional and survival reasons, I ensured that I was never drunk but in order to gain added agreements from the factions, I often let on that I was well lubed!

The body exchanges could be particularly gruesome. My first week in Sector saw me conducting a large body exchange of 80 dead combatants between the VRS and ABiH in the town of Ripac, a few kilometers southeast of Bihac. These exchanges were typically disproportionate with many more Bosnian Muslim casualties involved. In this case, the trade was 70 Muslims for 10 Serbs. There was a constant lack of UN-supplied body bags and many of the bodies lay in the open covered with white sheets in the hot summer sun. I will never forget the sights or the smell. I also quickly learned that money was involved with many of these exchanges. Families on both sides would pay an agreed fee to the opposition in order to get their loved one's remains back. Later in my UNMO tour, one of the body exchanges was abruptly halted when it was angrily discovered that a valuable body was missing. It was rescheduled a few days later once the faction found the correct body that the family had paid for.

A few words on trust, impartiality and integrity. My professional relationship with the UN local interpreters was critical. I spent much time gaining their trust and incorporating them fully into my UNMO team. In my case, it "paid off in spades" as there were numerous occasions where they literally saved my life and I was able, in a few cases, to repay the favour. I am proud to say that I was able to persuade many of them - despite being offered more pay from other countries - to join the Canadian NATO Implementation Force (IFOR) when they arrived to the Bihac Sector in January of 1996. One in particular, Aida Salfic, was the Canadian commanding officer's interpreter for many subsequent NATO Stabilization Force (SFOR) missions.

Impartiality and integrity was a must. The example that I like to cite for this was the numerous times that I was approached to be a "mule." The black market was a reality in wartime Bosnia. In the Bihac Pocket, food was very scarce and most of it went to the combatants. The preferred currency was Deutschmarks (DM) and it often cost 500 DM for a five-kilogram bag of flour. Because of my UN freedom of movement, I was occasionally approached a by locals to be a mule and carry money and goods from their families and/or supporters over the borders into the Pocket for an attractive mule fee of 10, 000 DM. I never did this. I knew that if I did this once, even if it was a small amount, word would



LCol Jeff Barr as 2 CAMBG Senior LO with Jay McLaren and some friendlies in Bihac.

get out and I would forever be compromised as a UN representative, and very likely be blackmailed.

Also because of the black market, gasoline was very expensive and scarce, and most of it was sent to the front lines for military use. As such, our UN trucks were often the only vehicles on the road. Official UN policy was not to transport locals whatsoever; however, we bent these rules when it came to carrying civilian casualties to hospitals. We justified this by trying to equally help all civilians with ambulatory needs regardless of their affiliation. This greatly enhanced our UNMO credibility amongst the locals. And by necessity, I became quite adept at first aid and this began my personal connection with the skill. Since retirement in 2015, through the Canadian Red Cross, I have taught first aid to over 3,500 Kingstonians, including doctors, nurses and first responders. Let's just call it: paying it forward.

In October of 1995, post Operation STORM and pre-Dayton Accords, I left Bihac and became the Team Leader of the newly established Sanski Most UNMO team. Our duties there were to monitor the cease fire violations along the Highway M-15 Prejidor corridor

and organized more body and POW exchanges. Sadly, during that time, I also had to personally bear witness to a large mass grave discovered at the Vrhpolje bridge over the Sana River where approximately 37 people were discovered shot with their hands bound and they were buried under the rubble of a bridge, which had been demolished in order to delay ABiH advances towards Sanski Most. Later in 1996, more mass graves were discovered by UK and Hungarian IFOR military engineers that were rebuilding the bridge. Since then, the UN has found three separate pits with an estimated total of 150 bodies. Again, they don't teach you this stuff at the Armoured School.

Also during this time, I hosted many "secret" visits and reces from Canadian UN military staff from Zagreb and later from 2 CMBG in Petawawa. Soon the secret was officially revealed and Canada announced that they would be contributing the command, recce and support elements an IFOR multinational brigade group (2 CAMNB). My first thought was that 1600 Canadian soldiers were coming to replace me, the sole Canadian in the Sector. After some gentle persuasion from a guy called Jim Ferron, the 2 CAMNB chief of staff, I agreed to stay on for a further six months in Bosnia and was employed as the Faction LO to 5 Corps, ABiH, an obvious fit. In this capacity, I used all of my wartime connections and did everything in my power to make the transition for Canadian troops to be both safe and productive. Eventually, I became the Senior LO for 2 CAMNB. Happily, this Rotation Zero included the RCD Recce Squadron whose leadership team included my good friends, Lowell Thomas, officer commanding, and Dennis "Badger" Levesque, squadron sergeant major and fellow jumper! Another Dragoon and key mentor that I readily leaned on was Rick Hillier, the deputy commander of 2 CAMNB. Having many old friends from the Regiment around me during my post-war transition definitely eased my journey.

I would be remiss if I did not thank the two Ricks (Rick Fawcett and Rick Lott) for their much needed friendship and support, and my awesome IFOR driver, Private Jay McLaren, RCR, who later became a Chief Warrant Officer in the Royal Canadian Air Force.

The RCD IFOR mission is the subject for other articles and I hereby challenge members of the regimental



LCol Jeff Barr as Bihac UNMO Team Leader sending reports via satellite.

family to write them. Also, I would highly recommend for background that you read the Maclean's article by Bruce Wallace at <https://archive.macleans.ca/article/1996/1/29/blood-and-pain>. I had the privilege of escorting him around the 2 CAMNB's sector for four days to help him gain ground truth and assist him with his understanding of the Canadian mission and tasks.

War does change people and those that have experienced it know of what I speak. I was very lucky to come out Bosnia relatively unscathed and I credit that mostly due to outstanding support from my family, including my in-laws. Most of them were either serving or retired officers in the Canadian Armed Forces and could somewhat relate to my situation.

That being said, I drew tremendous strength from my wife, Dawn, who was my rock. The civilian phone lines in Bihac were always down and the only UN phone that I could use for long-distance calls was in Coralici, a 50-kilometer drive from Bihac. There was no Skype or FaceTime in those days! She would get a five-minute call from me weekly that often ended abruptly when shelling was close by. She would have to wait another week to hear my voice and confirm that I was okay. Did I mention that she was pregnant during most of this? My third child, Mitchell, was born in January of 1996. Family resilience was also critical and I am forever grateful for her fortitude during this chaotic time.

by Jeff Barr, LCol (ret) RCD

(Author's note: Many thanks to Bann Price, my mentor and ex-squadron commander in Germany, for his dedication and superb work as the Editor of the RCD Association. To my good friend and hockey teammate, Mike Rostek, good luck in the new job mate and thank you for your service to the regimental family).



AN EXTRAORDINARY YEAR WITH DON

by Lt Andrew Fenton

In late 2004, I met a formidable member of our Regimental family, Tpr (ret'd) Don White, during a task in Italy commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Italian campaign. If you had told young Cpl Fenton then of the memorable experiences that friendship would bring 14 years later, he would have laughed at you. However, Don was soon to become a lifelong and true friend. October 2018 was the beginning of a truly awe-inspiring year where I accompanied Don to events that provided me with memories that I will cherish for the remainder of my life. What follows is a recounting of those events of my extraordinary year with Don.

The year began with Don and his children, Steve, Holly, Heather, and I, being invited by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to be present for the first ever address to Parliament by a Dutch Prime

Minister. I was asked by the Ambassador, who had some prompting I think, to escort Don throughout the day. During breakfast at the Chateau Laurier that morning, Don was introduced to Prime Minister Mark Rutte. We had about half an hour in a private dining room with him during which time we enjoyed a very casual and intimate coffee, and Don presented him with a regimental coin. I was immediately struck by the knowledge that PM Rutte had of Don and his personal life and the genuine and caring nature of our conversation. At the Canadian National War Memorial, we were introduced, by PM Rutte, to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. For the second time in one day I witnessed Don present a world leader with a regimental coin. The two Prime Ministers laid a wreath together in remembrance of the Canadians who gave their lives during the Liberation of the Netherlands. After the

wreath laying, we made our way over to Parliament Hill and were met at the door by a Parliamentary Page who escorted us to our seats in the front row on the floor of the House of Commons, immediately in front of the members of the Senate. Prior to the arrival of the Prime Ministers, I observed as Don was treated like a celebrity by all the Parliamentarians. Don posed for a selfie with almost every single Parliamentarian. During PM Rutte's speech, he thanked all Canadian soldiers that had been involved in the Liberation of the Netherlands, and then mentioned Don by name, which brought on a spontaneous standing ovation. Never in my life have I been so proud and humbled as I was to be beside him and watch as he received that honour from the Members of Parliament and the Senate. It brought him to tears and only ended when he sat down again. That momentous day in Ottawa wrapped up with lunch in the Parliamentary restaurant hosted by Don's MP.



Don and I in the House of Commons for PM Rutte address.

On long weekends, I typically travel to southern Ontario to spend time with my family who reside there. During most trips, I would make a stop in Oshawa for a coffee with Don. This year during my stops, Don and I have had a few unexpected adventures. On Remembrance Day weekend, I called Don to make sure he was up for a visit as I passed through the area. He mentioned that he was, but it would have to be quick as he had to

go drop the puck at an OHL game that night. By the time I arrived at his house, he had contacted the event organisers and had arranged to have me join him for the puck drop. Luckily, I had my DEU with me. So, there we were being introduced as we headed onto the ice to drop the puck. This is when I began to joke with Don about what he would get us into next, I had no idea. During Christmas leave, I ended up travelling on 21 Dec and planned to have a quick Regimental Birthday coffee with Don as I passed through. We chatted again during my drive and he mentioned that he had been invited to the Ontario Regiment Officer's Mess that evening for the Commanding Officer's Christmas social. When I got to his house, we began discussing the Regiment and had a coffee to toast the Regimental birthday. He asked if I had time to go with him to the Ontario Regiment event, and of course I did. We decided to put our own flair on the event and rushed out to pick up a birthday cake, for the Regiment, which we took with us to the Christmas Social. When the CO of the Ontario Regiment arrived, Don thanked him for throwing the RCD a birthday party and showed him the cake. The CO was a great sport and allowed us to do an official cake cutting to honour the RCD birthday.

The day before the regimental Leeuwarden celebration, LCol Marois surprised Don by asking him to promote me from Warrant Officer to Lieutenant in the Centurion room. Don hammed it up, as is to be expected if you have spent any time around him, by asking the CO if he was sure he wanted me to be an officer. He then proceeded to punch the new rank onto me "to make sure it sticks". The next day during the 2019 Leeuwarden celebrations, the Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands served as the Reviewing Officer for the parade. During his speech to the regiment, he announced that PM Rutte had recently named a newly developed tulip after Don. He also passed on an official invitation for the Regiment to visit Leeuwarden in 2020 to take part in the 75th anniversary of the liberation there. Don of course was present for the parade and again told the story of the Liberation of Leeuwarden to the Regiment on parade from his perspective. By the time of Don's annual Leeuwarden visit to the Regiment in Petawawa came to an end, he and I had both received personal letters from the Dutch PM Mark Rutte inviting us to travel to the Netherlands to assist in the opening of the year of celebrations honouring the 75 years since liberation. At that time, we had no idea what to expect.



Don making sure my promotion to Lt will “stick”.

A few weeks after Leeuwarden, some of Don’s adopted Dutch family arrived in Canada for a visit. No visit to Canada, of course, would be complete without a trip to Petawawa where Don acted as tour guide for his guests. The families had a fantastic visit touring the Regimental lines being shown vehicles, weapons, and of course the museum, by soldiers of the regiment. At the conclusion of the visit they stopped by the kit shop where the children wanted berets and cap badges as their souvenir. Once they were fitted for berets and had their cap badges installed by the kit shop staff, the CO and RSM made them all honorary Dragoons. This one seemingly small gesture from the Command Team meant more to those children than the entire remainder of the visit, and it was also the highlight of the visit for Don.

The end of August was a whirlwind. Our trip to the Netherlands started with KLM (the Dutch national airline) sending an airport limo to pick us up from Don’s Oshawa residence along with his daughters Holly, Heather, and son Steve. We arrived at the Toronto airport and were whisked through check-in by our own personal KLM rep, all the way to the first-class lounge. The flight in first class was outstanding and left us as rested as we could be for our week. Once we arrived, we were greeted by the Dutch Defence Attaché to Canada, LCol Ton Linseen, who had traveled to the Netherlands ahead of us to act as our guide and chauffeur. The first

day upon arrival, we travelled to Terneuzen and had a casual dinner at a restaurant on one of the dykes in the Scheldt estuary before turning in for the night.

Our second day began with a luncheon where we met Veterans from the other allied nations. After lunch we traveled to The Hague where we would meet with PM Mark Rutte and Canadian Governor General Julie Payette. Don was presented with a bouquet of Don White tulips by PM Rutte and gave the PM a custom commemorative hockey jersey in return. The jersey was a custom design from the Brampton Beast hockey team of the East Coast Hockey League. The jersey was originally designed for the team for Remembrance Day 2018 and they made a special edition for Don. The jersey they customised for PM Rutte has his name on the back along with the number 75, in honour of the 75 years since liberation. The shoulders have a Canadian flag and a Dutch flag crossed on them as well. Prior to the event with the PM, a member of his staff came over and told us that we “shouldn’t get offended or be disappointed if he doesn’t put the jersey on”. Don and I shared a grin and a laugh. Not five minutes later Don was presenting the PM with his jersey and told him “Mark, the only thing is I am not sure if I got you the right size”. PM Rutte’s reply of “should I try it on then?” was immediately followed by “But Don it will mess up my hair”. Not to be outsmarted, Don of course had an answer to that concern “Andy has a comb, give him your comb Andy.” Before the staffers knew what was happening, we had PM Rutte’s suit jacket hanging over a chair and he was fixing his hair with my comb as I helped Don into his jersey so that they would match. Watching the interaction between the two of them was truly heart warming and you could see the genuine joy on the faces of everyone on the room. After a while it was time for the Governor General (GG) to leave and PM Rutte asked Don to assist him with escorting her to her motorcade. The two of them zipped out the door together in their matching jerseys, and just prior to leaving the building Don and the GG exchanged coins and then we were out on the red carpet in front of the Dutch national media, just the four of us. When the GG was in her car and the motorcade was preparing to leave, we had about five minutes where it was just Don, PM Rutte, and I. Again, I was struck by the genuine conversation that followed. That was the end of the main event for the day, but we were far from done.

We travelled then to Bergen op Zoom, where we

visited the Canadian war cemetery and left the Don White tulips at the memorial. For dinner Don and his family were guests of the Canadian Defence Attaché to the Netherlands, Col Tim Young, at the Hotel de Draak. The menu was a special menu crafted for our visit and was amazing. The Hotel is the oldest hotel in the Netherlands founded in 1397, during the occupation it was a “hang out” for Germany officers, while simultaneously sheltering Jewish people in hidden portions of the building.

The next morning, we had a relatively late start and not far to travel as the ceremony for the opening of the 75 years since liberation was in Terneuzen, where we were staying. It started with an outstanding theatrical performance and then moved out to the dyke. There were tens of thousands of people in the town square and along the dyke for the ceremony, it was astonishing. Each of the Veterans was driven into the ceremony by a historic army vehicle and stopped en-route to be greeted by the Dutch and Belgian Kings and Queens. During their brief meeting, Don gave the Dutch King, you guessed it, a regimental coin.

The ceremony lasted about an hour and was accompanied by a sail past of allied naval vessels and a fly past of some period aircraft. After the ceremony, we walked back through the crowd handing out pins and flags to as many kids as we could find. During the post event reception Don was interviewed in the town square by Peter Akman, from CTV, for an episode of W5. They walked through the street between the patios of bars and cafes. The whole time there were throngs of people walking up to Don, interrupting the interview, to shake his hand and more than once the entire street erupted into cheers when different groups recognized him as a Canadian Veteran. There were several individuals that were moved to tears by the chance to meet Don and shake his hand or offer him a hug. I have always heard about how the Dutch people treat Canadian soldiers, but until you experience it, there is no way to explain the immense feeling of pride that wells up within you. Post official functions, we traveled a short way to Belgium and had dinner with the other official Veterans and their families at their hotel.

Our fourth day was my favourite and I think Don’s as well. We travelled to Apeldoorn, with a stop along the way at the Dutch national war museum. The vehicles



Don and I pay our respects at the Canadian war cemetery.

(including a Leopard 2A4) and aircraft (all suspended from the ceiling just above head height) on display were impressive to say the least. We were joined for our visit to the museum by Don’s “Dutch” family, about 20 family friends that Don has met during his many trips to the Netherlands over the last decades. They arrived en-masse with their children and surprised Don right in the parking lot.

After checking in at our hotel in Apeldoorn, we changed into our uniforms and visited the Canadian War Cemetery at Holten where 12 Dragoons are buried. We visited each of their graves and left a poppy at each one. This for me was the most emotional part of the trip. As we were leaving the cemetery, I had to take a few moments to myself to reflect on the sacrifice of those Dragoons.

Dinner that night was at Mondani restaurant in Lochen,



Don being presented the “Liberation 75” tulips by Princess Margriet at Het Loo Palace in Apeldoorn.

it is a “Canadian” themed restaurant, which also doubles as Branch 005 of the Royal Canadian Legion. The food was amazing, and the entire place is decorated with various Canadiana - snowshoes, skis, Tim Hortons, Whiskey, maple syrup, etc. Our party numbered 30 as we were accompanied by Don’s Dutch family. It happened to be LCol Linseen’s birthday, so we ensured he had a cake with pyrotechnics on it, no joke the “sparkler” had a 6-inch flame! Don could not allow the occasion to pass without a gift, so during our visit to the museum he hit the souvenir shop and purchased a gift which he presented at dinner.

Our last full day in the Netherlands began with a guided visit to the Dutch National Field of Honour. We were shown around by a local historian and visited the grave marker for a helicopter crew that were killed in Afghanistan. LCol Linseen knew the helicopter crew, so Don decided that we should pay our respects at their grave and leave small Canadian flags. Next up was lunch with the Mayor of Apeldoorn prior to heading to the Palace Het Loo for Don’s meeting with Princess Margriet. Upon arrival at the palace, we were escorted to the garden and awaited the Princess’ arrival. Princess Margriet arrived shortly and Don was presented to her. She spoke briefly to Don, in front of the news cameras, and presented him with a box that symbolised the gift of

1.1 million tulip bulbs being presented on behalf of the Dutch Royal Family to the people of Canada. After the official presentation, we moved off to another part of the garden where we had a very nice, quiet tea with the Princess for almost an hour. Listening to the interaction between the Princess and Don was remarkable. They talked about her childhood and the upbringing of her children, which included summers at camp in Ontario. They even discovered a shared acquaintance from the Oshawa area.

On arrival at the airport in Amsterdam for our return flight, we figured the exciting parts of the trip were over. But of course, when you are with Don there always seems to be something else that comes up. During the flight, Don was chatting with our first-class flight attendant and discovered that his father was from Leeuwarden and he was present the day it was liberated by the Dragoons. Once landed in Toronto, we waited until all the other passengers were off the plane and then had a photo taken of the three of us with my RCD flag beside the plane.

In October we were contacted by the Dutch embassy and asked to be present at the ceremony in Ottawa when the tulip bulbs that Don was given by the Princess would be presented to representatives from the Ottawa

Tulip Festival for planting. Don of course couldn't say no, so we accepted and were off again. We started off with lunch at the Dutch Ambassador's official residence prior to heading to the ceremony. Just before we left, the Ambassador changed into an RCD tie so that he would match with Don. Don presented the tulip bulbs, then assisted some high school students who planted them. He planted one himself and then chided me into planting one also.

This has been a snapshot of Don's year and only the events in which I participated. Don also spends at least one day a week working as a volunteer tour guide at the Ontario Regiment Museum in Oshawa. He volunteers with the Legion during the Poppy Campaign, hosts an annual RCD Association BBQ and is active in his church. There are constant requests from schools and organisations in the Oshawa area for him to speak, none of which he turns down, and he travels to Petawawa for every parade the Regiment conducts. He travelled to Italy with Veterans Affairs for the 75th anniversary celebrations at the end of Nov 2019. He plans to return to the Netherlands in the spring for a month to visit Leeuwarden on April 15th and the National Liberation Celebrations 4-5 May 2020.

The resilience and dedication that Don displays, now 95 years old, still astounds me. If you have met him you will know that he is always in a great mood and has a razor-sharp wit, just ask him how he feels and you'll understand. I have had opportunities and experiences with Don that I never could have imagined, the most special to me were the quiet coffees we shared at his house in Oshawa, and the post parade receptions in Petawawa. He is an outstanding representative of our Regiment and it is my great pleasure and honour to call him friend.



Don and I with the Flight Attendant whose father was liberated in Leeuwarden by the RCD.



Dutch PM Rutte, Don and I saying goodbye to the Canadian Governor General.



COLIN GREENER

IN HIS OWN WORDS

Supplied by Elinor Florence from an interview with Colin about his wartime experiences taped around 1970.

In March 1917, the Huns evacuated part of the Somme line, and our outfit got the nod to move in. We had three days forced march. We landed at Peronne. The area was unknown to us, so we sent out scouting parties to determine our area. It was very cold, with snow and rain.

I was a Corporal in charge of a Hotchkiss gun, seven hundred rounds per minute. That night while we were on patrol, we were ordered to get ready and mount in company with three other Hotchkiss gun sections, and in pitch dark, we travelled about seven miles northeast.

By early dawn we were concealed in a sunken road near the village which was to be taken. The whole group was under the command of Major Newcomen. We had to go up quite a hill. We were mounted at the time. We tried it mounted first of all, but there was too much machine

gun fire and there were shells, too.

Most of the German artillery were away to hell and gone, but they had a lot of light batteries there. We called them pipsqueaks. They were the smallest shells that the Germans used. I think they would be about fifteen pounders. Good enough to kill you.

We had to get out of there. We sent our horses back and got them to a sunken road. Those roads were made by traffic over the centuries. There were a lot of them in France. They were worn down about ten feet. Anyway, we got our horses down there, and left men with eight horses apiece so that we would have them when we needed them again.

We started to take the hill on foot. It started to get a little hot, so we flopped. That was when I lost my two men. I knew there was a sniper. The sun would come out for a minute and then it would go under again. It was wet because it had been snowing, then raining. That made our helmets shine, you see.

I took my hat off and used it as a scoop to get a little cover. I was shoving the dirt out in front. And you know, that damn sniper, he put a hole in my tin helmet, pretty near the button! The bullet went right between my arms.

We had our overcoats on, what we called British warmes, they were short overcoats, and he cut the damn pocket, he slit the pocket right across, and I lost my pipe and tobacco!

That bullet hit my number two man, and he let a yowl out of him. I was busy watching where this shot came from, and there was a cemetery just outside this little village. I saw this fellow and he was speeding up, getting out of there, he was near a big gravestone.

I had my gun lined up. This was a very fast shooting gun, for those days anyway. Seven hundred rounds a minute. Of course, you couldn't shoot it that fast, because you couldn't load that many shells in it. Our shells were in a strip of thirty.

Anyway, I saw this fellow and I thought: 'I'll teach you to shoot holes in my tin hat!' and I let him have it.

I don't know whether I got him or not. I couldn't go and look because we were under fire. But those snipers were pretty slick, and of course they had good rifles and good telescopic sights, too. That was how he was able to get my lid. I guess he thought my head was in it!

My man, he was hit in the leg. I bandaged him up and we got him out. We had to lie there for a couple of hours. A fellow and me, we were in the hole and we saw this horse coming by, all alone, at a gallop. This fellow jumped out of the hole and ran and grabbed the lead line on this pack horse, and we took the gun off him and the ammunition, the satchel we called it, that little grip. Each one of them held three hundred rounds. We did this quickly because we were under fire at the same time.

We took the bridle off the horse and gave him a swat on the rear and away he went. We never saw him again. The fellow who had charge of that pack horse, he would ride his own horse and lead the other horse along. He must have been either killed or wounded.

Anyway, I knew that pack horse well. He was a perfect pack horse. The trouble with pack horses was that they would stay behind, and they wouldn't jump with you. This fellow, he would jump with you."

It was cold and wet there, and we had nothing to eat. In the meantime, the infantry had come up and taken over the village. We had chased them out of the village, and then the infantry came up and consolidated it. Finally, we were told to get the hell out.

When we got back to our regiment, the brigade was just pulling out. They were making a big assault that night. I had two casualties and there were only four others and myself left in my section.

And we met our Colonel, Van Straubenzee, a man most heartily detested. And of course, he stopped me.

The whole brigade was lined up, ready to pull out, you see. And he said: 'WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?' just like that. I said: 'We have been taking a village, sir.'

We had left at one in the morning. We hadn't had anything to eat, and we were ravenously hungry.

Anyway, he said: 'Rejoin your troops immediately!' Well, we rejoined our troop and they were just pulling out.

The troop sergeant had our rations, two extra rations because there were two less of us. That was one of the days we got some beef steak. It wasn't T-bone steak or anything like that. It was raw beef, and of course we couldn't cook it, but we got hard tack and some bread and some jam and cheese.

That was twenty-four hours of rations, you see. That was dished out every night, and it had to last you until the next night. We ate, of course – the only time in my life I ever ate raw meat, and it tasted damn good, too!



Colin Greener and Charles Light

The Royal Canadian Dragoons Association

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Memories of the OLD COMRADES



Boeselager Team - March 3rd, 1985, Ingoldstadt



Riot Control Practice - Beachburg May, 1991

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Bennett, B	Duncan, C	Lofgren, W	Newton, T	Smith, C
Benoit, R	Farnell, M	MacIntosh, N	Nickerson, JN	Tan, P-A
Bigney, R	Follwell, J	Malloff, M	Pendergast, JP	Watt, F
Boire, M	Gagnon, M	Maraj, S	Pineau, S	White, C
Brown, JM	Graham, A	Marois, PA	Potter, JA	Wong, KW
Brown, RJ	Graham, S	Marois, RV	Power, B	Zeisig, J
Brush, J	Grant, DJ			

\$500 - \$1,499 - Regimental Family

Addy, C	Bell, J	Crombie, J	Muldrew, S	Tremblay, D
Atherton, A	Bonefant-Deguisse, JP	Kerckhoff, EA	Star Motors of Ottawa	Van Straubenzee, A
Atkinson, P				

\$1,500 - \$9,999 - Patrons of the Old Guard

Conam Charitable Foundation	Fraser, D	Watson, S
Dickinson, D	J.R.B. Steacie Investments Ltd	
Dow Motors (Ottawa) Ltd	R.A. Beamish Foundation	

\$10,000 and above - Commanding Officer's Circle

Covell Foundation	H.B. Eugene Lake	The International Knightly Order of St. George Foundation
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ATTACK



***ON ALL
FRONTS***